REMARKS

An Office Action was mailed on September 10, 2003. Claims 1 - 25 are pending in the present application. With this response, Applicant amends claims 1 – 4, 6 – 7 and 9 - 25. No new matter is introduced. Support for the amendments may be found, for example, at page 17, line 10 through page 19, line 4 of Applicant's specification.

OBJECTION TO SPECIFICATION

The specification is objected to under MPEP § 608.01(p) for incorporating by reference patent applications filed in a country outside the U.S. Applicants amends the specification to eliminate this incorporation by reference, and respectfully requests that the objection be withdrawn.

The abstract of the disclosure is objected to as being unclear. Applicant amends the abstract in a manner that follows amendments to the claims, and respectfully requests that the objection be withdrawn.

OBJECTION TO DRAWING

The drawing is objected to under 37 C.F.R. 1.83(a) as failing to show every feature of the claimed invention. Applicant thanks the Examiner for discussing this objection by telephone with Applicant's representative for clarification. Specifically, the Examiner finds that claim limitations relating to the "passing rate of time of the character object" and "multiplying the corresponding coefficient to a variable for determining the position for every unit time of the objects in the virtual space" are not sufficiently illustrated by the drawing. Applicant proposes changes to FIGs. 4, 5 and 7 to better illustrate these limitations, and submits clean-sheet copies of the affected drawing sheets. Applicant also amends the corresponding descriptions for FIGs. 4, 5 and 7 in the

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specification. No new matter is introduced. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the objection be withdrawn.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 1 – 25 are rejected under the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. § 112 respectively for being indefinite. Specifically, the Examiner suggests that the limitation "partially changing a passing rate of time in a virtual space" of claims 1, 9, 17 and 25 is unclear. Applicant respectfully submits that this limitation is adequately defined, for example, in Applicant's specification beginning at page 16, line 12. The Examiner suggests that the limitation "multiplying a predetermined coefficient ..." of claims 3, 11 and 19 is unclear. Applicant respectfully submits that this limitation is adequately defined, for example, in Applicant's specification beginning at page 16, line 12 and page 19, lines 4 - 17. The Examiner suggests that limitations in claims 5, 6, 13, 14, 21 and 22 relating to "viewpoint moving speed" and "acceptance frequency" are unclear. Applicant respectfully submits that this limitation is adequately defined, for example, in Applicant's specification beginning at page 22, line 14 through page 23, line 8. The Examiner suggests that the limitation addressing "control target" in claims 7, 15 and 23 is unclear. Applicant respectfully submits that this limitation is adequately defined, for example, in Applicant's specification beginning at page 18, line 23 – page 19, line 4. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that this rejection be withdrawn.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 101

Claim 25 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 101 as being directed to non-statutory subject matter. Specifically, the Examiner finds that claim 25 is directed to an information program not tangibly embodied within the recited computer structure.

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Applicant amends claim 25 to recite a computer that stores and executes an information processing program, and respectfully requests that this rejection be withdrawn.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. §§ 102, 103

Claims 1, 2, 9, 10, 17, 18 and 25are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,429,998 to Itou. Claims 3 – 7, 11 – 15 and 19 – 23 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Itou. Claims 8, 6 and 24 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Itou in view of Japanese Patent Application No. JP 2000-132705 to Hisayoshi. Applicant amends claims 1 – 4, 6 – 7 and 9 - 25 to further clarify the nature of their invention, and respectfully traverses these rejection.

In independent claims 1, 9, 17 and 25, Applicant respectively discloses an information processing method, a program execution device for executing an information processing program, a computer readable recording medium containing the information processing program, and a computer for storing and executing an information processing program. Each of these claims further discloses method steps or program code directed to: a) construct a virtual space including a viewpoint and a character object controlled by a predetermined operation terminal, b) determine the presence of occurrence of an event satisfying a specific condition, c) change a passing rate of time of the character object in a the virtual space, by changing a displacement of the character object among frames in a world coordinate system of the virtual space from the state in which the specific event does not occur, when the event occurs; and d) change an object to be controlled by the operation terminal from the whole character object to a specific part of the character object, when the event occurs.

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For example, as illustrated with reference to Applicant's FIGs. 4 – 6, when an object (ball B) falls within a predetermined distance D' of glove G, the passing rate of time for glove G changes such that the speed S1 with which the glove G is manipulated diminishes to a speed S2 in order to slow the passing rate of time , thereby making it easier for example for the player to manipulate glove G of character C to catch ball B.

Itou discloses a game system that allows a rate of time in a battle sequence to be adjusted in response to skill and experience of a player (see, e.g., the abstract of Itou). Unlike Applicant's claimed invention, Itou does not disclose or suggest Applicant's claim limitation "changing a passing rate of time of the character object in the virtual space, by changing a displacement of the character object among frames in a world coordinate system of the virtual space from the state in which the specific event does not occur." Itou fails to teach Applicant's claim limitation limiting control of the character object to a specific part of the character object when the passing rate of time is changed. These limitations in addition fail to be taught or suggested by the combination of Masanori and Hiyoshi.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that independent claims 1, 9, 17 and 25 and 19 are not anticipated by the Itou, and are therefore allowable. As claims 2 – 9, 11 – 18 and 20 – 27 respectively depend from allowable claims 1, 10 and 19, Applicants further submit that claims 2 – 9, 11 – 18 and 20 – 27 are allowable for at least this reason.

CONCLUSION

An earnest effort has been made to be fully responsive to the Examiner's objections. In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is believed that claims 1-25, consisting of independent claims 1, 9, 17 and 25, and the claims dependent therefrom, are in condition for allowance. Passage of this case to allowance is earnestly solicited.

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However, if for any reason the Examiner should consider this application not to be in condition for allowance, he is respectfully requested to telephone the undersigned attorney at the number listed below prior to issuing a further Action.

Any fee due with this paper may be charged on Deposit Account 50-1290.

Respectfully submitted,
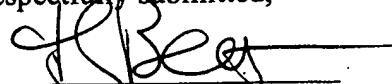
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